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2

January 23, 2009

Dear Appropriations Sub Committee,

Please accept my thanks for funding the Medicaid Waiver program. I have only recently started with Waiver services, and I want to tell you how it has improved my life.

I have several mental illnesses and several physical disabilities. These combinations have contributed to severe depressions many times in my life. Prior to acceptance in the Waiver program, I only had Personal Care Attendants (PCA's). These didn't even meet my minimal needs. Since starting with the Waiver program, things have vastly improved in that I now have a homemaker, hab trainer, caregivers, and a lifeline, (an alert system). I also have the options of having more mental health services paid for through Waiver. For the first time in a long time, I finally have some hope in my life.

It would be useful to my world to have access to a Serious Disabling Mental Illness, (SDMI), Waiver because a Case Manager with a mental health background is much better equipped to deal with my issues than one versed primarily in physical disability issues. I know this program has been piloted in other parts of Montana and I would like to see it available all over the state. I know it has great merit.

I would like to request more Waiver slots be made available and funded. There is a waiting list of 500, which tells you that needs are not being met. There are many people in institutions who could be living independently in the community with Waiver services. This would save the state quite a bit of money as compared to institutional costs, while making the consumer happier. It's a win-win situation.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Yours truly,

Brooke T. Jaqueth


Missoula, MT